



Parent Handbook

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345 Middlefield Rd., Menlo Park, CA 94025 650-329-4236

OPERATING HOURS

Children may be present at the Center any time during the operating hours of **7:30 am to 6:00 pm**, Monday through Friday, on the days they are enrolled. Prior to 8:00 am, infants and toddlers are cared for in the Moonstone Room and preschool children are cared for together in one of the preschool classrooms. At 8:00 they will be taken to their regular room.

GEOKIDS STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

GeoKids is a developmental program for children between the ages of 3 months to ~5.9 years. The program's success depends on caregiving that recognizes children as capable individuals in the process of learning language and cognitive, social, and creative skills. This learning is enhanced by an environment that maximizes freedom and encourages exploration, while providing safe limits and consistent nurturing.

OPERATIONAL VISION

At GeoKids, we believe that respect, consistency, and quality of care is developed through a clear educational orientation that can be shared and implemented by all professional staff and by parents who work in the program. Beginning with a common understanding for the way children learn, we can build a unified approach to support children's growth, development, and self-confidence.

"Children are self-motivated in this learning process, driven by a fundamental urge to act on the world to produce successful outcomes that are personally satisfying."

In our recognition of children as active initiators of their own meaning-making, it is our vision, as caregivers at GeoKids, to create a place which can value and support the child as a capable and competent learner:

"We strive to provide a safe and embracing environment that enables children to discover and explore. Our ultimate desire is to support the choices children make by recognizing and accepting the individuality of the child and the process of childhood. We aspire to build upon the child's distinct perspective of the world in working toward a greater sensitivity and understanding of the child's larger community membership."

There are four key points to this vision:

1. A Supportive Adult Presence

- The warm and accepting presence of adults is key to reassuring children that the world is a safe place that will provide for their needs.
- The supportive adult encourages children to participate in everything that concerns them and to do as much as they are capable of doing for themselves.

2. Adults Who Understand The Child And The Process of Childhood

- Adults come to understand the individual child and the process of growth and learning that defines childhood.
- The development of the child's mind and body proceeds through a process of incremental steps. The gradual development of skills, thoughts and feelings comprise the child's uniqueness on a pathway to maturity.

- Adults strive to recognize a child's uniqueness and look for ways to connect the child with GeoKids.

3. Adults Who Let Children Solve Their Own Problems

- Through sensitive observation, active listening, and open communication, adults can begin to forecast what kinds of questions to ask, what type of information to provide, how to have constructive conversations with the children, and when the right moment to participate with the child is.

4. Adults Who Encourage Children to Pay Attention To Others

- Finding ways to bring children together to work with each other and encouraging children to pay attention to the feelings, thoughts and ideas of others will help build the foundation for positive pro-social attitudes. As professional staff and parent co-ops work alongside one another in the classroom, it is important for adults to give children the message that they are capable and competent learners. By providing an educational atmosphere that encourages children to take control and responsibility for themselves and their learning, we can support children in achieving a solid sense of self-confidence, pride, and recognition of their own abilities.

CLASSROOM COVERAGE

The center is open from 7:30 am to 6:00 pm. However, children do not all arrive and leave at the same time: arrival is gradual through the morning from 7:30 to 10:00 and leaving is gradual from 4:00 to 6:00. Teachers' schedules are staggered within each classroom: generally, there are teachers scheduled at 8-10, 9-5 and 10-6 within each classroom, with one infant teacher and one preschool teacher arriving at 7:30 to cover the few very early arrivals.

In addition, parents are assigned co-op times in the mornings and late afternoons to supplement adult presence when fewer than three teachers are present. They also co-op at lunch times to cover teachers' lunch breaks.

The staff includes "support staff" who are available to cover teachers when they are out sick, on vacation or out of the classroom for breaks (as required by law), meetings or planning. In this way the classrooms are always covered by persons who are familiar to the children; we do not use agencies for substitute teachers. The administrative staff also provides additional coverage as needed throughout the day.

CURRICULUM

GeoKids believes that children, families and teachers can work together to develop curriculum. It is the belief at GeoKids that we are not preparing children specifically for kindergarten, but to have a life-long love of learning. We offer a curriculum that challenges, encourages, and supports children in their quest for knowledge, recognizing the developmental stages of childhood and the unique gifts, talents, and abilities of each child.

Play-Based Curriculum

The curriculum at GeoKids is firmly play-based. We embrace the idea that play is a vital activity for infants and children, and that it is their natural, primary medium for learning. Teachers arrange environments in such a way that play is supported, and they give children the time and space that they need to carry out their play; activities and materials are provided to extend and deepen the play. Literacy and numeracy are learned in play contexts rather than by academic instruction.

Emergent Curriculum

Activities and explorations emerge from the children's own interests, as observed and recorded by the teachers. Depending upon the age of the children, the emergent ideas may find expression in a series of linked activities over time, or in a more focused exploration or project with goals that are agreed upon by children with the teachers' support. Some activities may be teacher-directed; many are child-directed. Teachers create an underlying plan for supporting the children's inquiries in meaningful ways, based on observation and collaboration, but that plan remains a flexible guide rather than a rigid prescription for curriculum. In planning activities and materials, teachers allow for modifications so that the curriculum can be easily adapted to the differing needs and abilities of individual children.

We do not use weekly “themes” as a basis for curriculum.

Inspiration from Reggio Emilia

GeoKids is inspired by the Reggio Emilia approach, which, among other values, encourages children's intellectual development through systematic focus on symbolic representation. Children are encouraged to explore their environment and express themselves through words, movement, drawing, painting, playing, and other modes of expression. To this end we provide many varied materials and many opportunities to explore the properties of those materials.

Relationships at the Core of the Program

It is the belief at GeoKids that strong, rich, and meaningful curriculum is developed as relationships are developed. At GeoKids, we value the following relationships:

Child to child	Child to parent
Child to caregiver	Child to materials and environment
Caregiver to parent	Caregiver to caregiver

Supporting, trusting relationships provide a nurturing context in which the curriculum shifts and changes to fit the individual developmental and cognitive needs of children. Activities are often presented in a way that encourages children to work together. Daily meetings provide a forum in which children can exchange ideas, learn to listen to one another, and be a part of a classroom community. In addition, the development of an understanding of Self among others is central: we pay close attention to social development, providing vital support as children learn to interact, work together, resolve conflicts and act pro-socially.

STAFF

The GeoKids staff is composed of professionals trained in Early Childhood Education. All teachers meet or exceed qualifications as required by California licensing. Most teachers have their Child Development Permit issued by the State of California's Commission on Teacher Credentialing. Most staff members have their Associates or Bachelors degrees, and some have Masters degrees. GeoKids encourages teachers to continue their training at the college level and provides additional in-service training. Regularly scheduled staff meetings and professional development opportunities encourage staff members to continually increase their knowledge of developmentally appropriate teacher practices so that they may better serve young children.

Staff Annual Evaluations

All staff members have formal evaluations annually. Parent input is solicited and shared with the staff. Please take the time to fill out the evaluation forms when you receive them. Your insights provide valuable feedback to the staff.

After Hours Care

We discourage the GeoKids staff from soliciting or providing care for GeoKids children outside normal working hours so as to maintain appropriate professional relationships with families. The GeoKids staff is not permitted to provide transportation for children enrolled.

CENTER PROCEDURES

Membership - Member in Good Standing

Membership in the Menlo Survey Daycare Center is granted to all families enrolling their child in GeoKids. Other individuals may be granted membership on a yearly basis by a majority vote of the Board of Directors. As a participation program, our success depends on full participation. The Board has defined "member in good standing" as those members who have fulfilled all membership obligations as stipulated in the Parent Handbook and the

Membership agreement, and members who are in full compliance with all other standing policies and procedures of the Center.

Sign-in and Sign-out

It is a state licensing requirement that each child must be signed in and out by a parent or authorized parent representative every day on the Sign In and Out sheets located in the classrooms. A full signature and the time are required. Failure to do so can result in stiff penalties and fines up to \$2,500 to the Center, which will be passed on to parents.

Children will be released only to those authorized persons who are at least 16 years old and have been designated on the center's One-day Release or Alternate Release Authorization forms (see below.) In an emergency, we will release your child to anyone designated on the Emergency Form. It is the parent's responsibility to notify the GeoKids administration of any changes on the Emergency Form; you may update this form at any time.

Release Authorizations

A release authorization form must be filled out if someone other than a parent or legal guardian comes to pick up your child. Parents must alert the teacher(s) with a release authorization form:

- One-Day Release Authorization: use this to authorize release on a specific day.
- Alternate Release Authorization: use this form if you want to have an arrangement with another parent to pick up your child, or a nanny or other non-family member who will be picking up your child on a regular basis.

*****We cannot release children based on a phone call*****

Any person authorized by the parents but not known to the teacher will be asked for picture identification before he/she is allowed to take a child from the preschool. The release forms can be found in the lobby and in the classroom binders.

Open Center Policy

Parents are welcome to visit their child in the center at any time during operating hours.

Schedule Changes (Enrollment)

If your childcare schedule needs to be changed, we may be able to adjust it depending on enrollment. The Executive Director reviews all requests, and will contact you to discuss the change. Schedule changes are most easily accommodated for a new school year in the fall.

Drop-in Care

As a service to families, we can provide occasional drop-in care for enrolled children on a space-available basis.

- Drop-in days must be approved; requests may be emailed to scheduling@geokids.org.
- Drop-in fees will appear on your tuition statement. The fee is per day; there is no hourly fee.
- When parents come to GeoKids for center business such as fundraising, community building, or other committee work, we can often allow parents to drop-in their child at no charge for a maximum of 2 hours, subject to approval of the Executive Director. Please notify the Executive Director of your need in advance.
- Drop-in care is provided at no charge for children to allow a parent to attend a classroom meeting or parent conference.
- We cannot provide drop-in care for any child after disenrollment.
- Children who are enrolled part-time may drop-in no more than two days per month.

Late Pick-Up

GeoKids closes promptly at 6:00pm. Our rental agreement stipulates that all parents and children must have left the Center by this time. Parents will be charged **\$60/hr billed in 15-minute intervals** after 6:00pm for **each** child, which will be added to your next invoice. If possible, when you know you are going to be late (e.g. you get stuck in traffic), please call 650-329-4236 to let the teachers know. Repeated late pick-ups may result in termination of childcare services for your child.

Note that late pick-ups present a considerable inconvenience to staff after a long day as well as expense to the center. Please make every effort to arrive sooner than 6:00 so that we may close the center at the appropriate time.

Notice of Withdrawal

Families must give a minimum of **30 days written** notice for leaving GeoKids. An Exit Form is available at the front desk. If your child is enrolled at GeoKids for any part of any month following notice you will be expected to pay tuition for the **entire month** and will remain responsible for co-op through to the end of the month. Tuition is not prorated.

Example: A family gives notice July 15th for ending August 15th. Family is responsible for tuition and all other obligations for the **entire** month of August.

Families who must leave the Center on sabbatical or other long-term absence may be placed on the wait list with a priority status. Space cannot be held without payment for any reason.

Transitions

Each year the ages and developmental needs of the children currently enrolled at GeoKids are evaluated. Decisions about classroom placements are individual for each child. Some of the considerations for determining the most appropriate placement are:

- developmental readiness of the children, including language development, physical readiness, and level of social skills
- temperament and strengths of the child
- the age spread of the children currently enrolled,
- relationships with peers and educators

In all cases our primary concern is to provide an environment in which an individual child can thrive. The age ranges served within our programs can fluctuate from year to year. August/September is the time when most children move to the next program, since this is when the oldest children leave for kindergarten. Mid-year classroom changes sometimes occur under special circumstances.

Siblings

Under licensing guidelines for the State of California, as well as our insurance guidelines, we **cannot allow children under the age of 16 who are not enrolled at GeoKids to be present during school hours** (this does not count drop-off and pick-up times). Mothers or fathers who have newborn siblings **can co-op with their newborns until the child is 12 weeks old**. The infant must be in a carrier on the co-oper that allows the co-oper to be free to fulfill his/her duties. If it becomes too disruptive to co- op with your infant, the staff can request that you buy out your co-op time. In an emergency situation in which you cannot fulfill your co-op hours without bringing a sibling, you should notify GeoKids, as you will need to buyout that time.

When your child has been at the center for 6 months, your other child will receive sibling priority on the waitlist.

CENTER CLOSURES

Scheduled Closures:

A calendar is issued with the Admissions Agreement each year listing the specific days that the Center will be closed in the upcoming school year. In general, the Center will be closed the following days:

- Major Federal holidays
- Friday following Thanksgiving
- One week (typically 5-6 school days) from Christmas Eve through New Year's Day

7-9 additional days each year for staff in-service training. A 30-day notice is given prior to closing for staff in-service trainings.

Policy for Non-Scheduled Closure of GeoKids

Because we are located on Federal property, it is possible that we could be ordered to close under unusual, unforeseen circumstances. Notification to our families will occur as soon as possible. In these unusual circumstances the following policy will apply. For intermittent closure (less than 5 consecutive working days) of GeoKids on days other than regularly scheduled closures, families will be credited for days closed based on the daily cost for the family. Co-op hours will be waived on the days the Center is closed. The Center will make every effort to assist families needing childcare on days the Center is closed.

PARENT PARTICIPATION

The creation of a unified approach to caring for our children is a main goal for GeoKids. We accomplish this through a collaborative effort between staff and parents. The participation of parents in the day-to-day life of the classroom is vital to our vision. When parents are unable to participate on a regular basis, we welcome grandparents or other close family members to fulfill the requirement with the advance approval of the Executive Director and a current TB test.

Orientation Meetings

All parents (or other participating family members) are required to attend the Philosophy, Health & Safety Meeting before participating in the classroom. The initial Room Meeting in each classroom offers an introduction to the staff and program-specific information which is relevant to that classroom.

Parent Participation Schedule

The number of co-op hours required depends on the number of days per week your child is enrolled. See Rate Sheet to find out your family's required co-op participation. Once enrolled, you sign up for regular participation hours. Families with more than one child at the center may deduct ½ hour per child from their co-op commitment, except when the deduction would bring their co-op commitment to less than the required one hour in each child's classroom.

Role of the Co-oping Parent

Our vision for all adults who participate in our program is as a supportive presence, believing in children as capable, competent learners. We achieve this through an understanding and appreciation for the individuality of the child, the process of childhood, and adults who support the choices children make. What occurs during participation time depends on the time of day in the program and the needs of the children during that time. Parent involvement ranges from assisting staff with children's direct needs to helping with routine maintenance.

Co-op Time

Program continuity and quality depends on commitment to co-op time. Parents must sign-in and out on the daily sheet when they arrive to co-op. This is our indication that the parent participation responsibility has been met. Being late for your co-op affects our ability to provide high-quality childcare.

Dedicated Buy-out

Although we'd like to have parents participate in all of their required participation hours, we recognize that this is not always possible. Families must sign up for at least one co-op hour per week and may choose to do a Dedicated Buyout for the remainder of their required participation hours. A per-hour fee will be added to your monthly invoice as part of tuition. These buy-outs cannot be made up or fulfilled with bank hours.

Co-op Schedule Changes

Once a participating parent has chosen their co-op hours, he/she becomes responsible for those hours for the entire school year. If your work or other circumstances change and require an adjustment to your co-op hours, you must make arrangements with administrative staff by emailing your needs to scheduling@geokids.org. Teachers cannot authorize co-op schedule changes.

Buy-outs

When you cannot co-op during your scheduled time, please make every effort to exchange the time with other parents. However, if you are unable to find someone to swap with, you may “buy out” your time by notifying scheduling@geokids.org of the classroom, date and time that you will miss.

Buy-out rates are determined by the amount of notice given. There are four types of buy-outs:

- **Regular buy-outs** are when at least one week’s notice is given. You may make up the missed time within 30 days. If you do not make up the time within 30 days, you will automatically be billed when the buyout ‘expires’.
- **Sick buy-outs** are when you are unable to do your co-op because you are sick or you must stay home with a sick child. These are treated the same as Regular Buy-Outs and can be covered with banked hours or made up within 30 days.
- **Late buy-outs** are when less than one week’s notice is given. You cannot use banked hours or make-up this time unless it is due to child or parent illness. You will be billed for this time at the “Late Buy-Out” rate.
- **No show:** Failure to give any notice before your scheduled co-op time will result in a “no show” and will be billed at the “No Show” rate. You cannot use banked hours or make-up this time.

Make-ups

Parents who are unable to participate due to illness or who have given at least one week of notice may choose to make up (“bank”) their time within 30 days of the buy-out date. Parents wishing to make up hours should check the Bank Calendars posted in your child’s room for times available to bank. If you don’t make up your time within 30 days the charges are added to your next monthly tuition statement. Note: parents may not bank or co-op on days that their child is not enrolled at GeoKids.

Co-op Swapping

When parents cannot fulfill regular co-op times, GeoKids’ classrooms are best helped if these times are swapped, traded, or exchanged with another family. This way, the classrooms will have needed support and the children’s day will run smoothly. Finding someone else to cover your co-op time on short notice will eliminate the “Late Buy-Out” fee.

Banking Hours

It is possible to “bank” hours by doing additional co-op time in advance. Parents wishing to bank hours should check the Bank Calendars in each classroom. Banked hours can be used any time you have a regular buy-out or sick buy-out (see above.) Banked hours cannot be used to cover lateness, last minute, or no-shows. Parents are not permitted to bank on days that their child is not enrolled.

Special Circumstances

Because our expenses remain constant, we cannot offer tuition reduction or waiver of co-op responsibilities during times of absence due to extended illness, vacation, travel or field work. During such absences co-op hours should be swapped or bought out. In the case of pregnancy and/or new maternity, contact the Executive Director to make appropriate allowances regarding co-op obligations.

Co-op Record

Your regular scheduled co-op time is printed on the daily sign-in sheet. When you do your co-op, write your arrival and departure times on the sign-in sheet. Whenever you bank hours, write them in on the sign-in sheet. The sign-in sheet is our record of your participation, so if you don’t record your hours there, you might not get credit for them! Your monthly Co-op Statement will help you keep track of your buy-outs and banked hours throughout the year.

SPECIAL NOTE ABOUT CO-OP TIMES AND BILLING:

Your participation in the classroom is scheduled for a particular time. Parents are a part of our legal adult/child ratio, and we rely upon your presence for the whole duration of your scheduled time. In many cases staff scheduling

depends upon the presence of parents at certain times. Please regard your co-op time as a specific commitment, rather than an approximate time span.

We recognize that traffic and other unexpected factors can delay your arrival, and we can make allowances for delays of 5-10 minutes. In such cases, you can stay an equivalent time longer and receive credit for your whole co-op time. However, if you are late by 15 minutes or more for your co-op, you will be billed at the Late rate, (see billing section), even if you stay later to "make it up." Similarly, if you leave early from your co-op without giving prior notice, you will be billed. Arriving early for co-op will not be accepted as cause for leaving early.

GEEKIDS BILLING AND FEES

Tuition and fee statements will typically be put in your boxes about a week before the 1st of the month, but never later than 5 pm on the 7th day of the month billed. Monthly fees are detailed on the "Tuition Rate Sheet." Payments for tuition are due on the 15th day of the month being billed (e.g., payment for October is due on Oct. 15th.) Payment received after the 15th will incur a late payment fee.

Our tax identification number appears on the top of each bill and is used for tax-deductible childcare expenses. If you need a copy of any statement, [send your request to Billing@geokids.org](mailto:Billing@geokids.org). If you have a flexible spending account requiring a signature, [you can bring it to the front desk](#).

Fees are detailed each year on your Admissions Agreement. Fees you may see on your bill:

- An *annual membership fee* is billed and paid by all members each September.
- Dedicated buy out fee
- Regular buy out
- Late buy out (less than one week notice)
- Arrived late/left early co-op fee
- Expired buyouts: this occurs when you buy out and do not make up the time within the allotted 30 day period.
- Drop in rate for extra days
- No-show for co-op
- Late payment fee
- One time Administrative fee (in limited cases, in lieu of waitlist fee)
- Late pick-ups (after 6 PM)

Families who are remiss in their payments may be asked to leave the Center.

Please note that the Executive Director and administrative staff are not permitted to change billing policies. If you believe that special circumstances mitigate a charge on your bill, you should first contact the Executive Director for clarification. If you believe that an exception or variation to the billing policy is warranted, you must submit a request in writing to the Board of Directors, which must approve any variations.

FUNDRAISING

Fundraising and community efforts funded the start-up costs to open GeoKids in 1987. As the school became financially stable, fundraising built up an operating reserve that provided additional money for staff benefits and school program enhancement. We now generally fundraise for capital improvement and equipment, tuition assistance, professional development for our teachers, and savings. We strive for 100% family participation in our Annual Campaign: no amount is too small, and 100% of donations to the Annual Campaign go directly to the school. Donations are voluntary and are 100% tax-deductible. The Board determines the fundraising goal for the year.

HEALTH POLICY

Hand Washing Practices

To help us stop the spread of germs at GeoKids, each child, parent, and staff member **must** wash their hands upon arrival. In addition, all adults and children should wash hands:

- after blowing noses,
- after diaper changes or toileting
- after handling garbage, cleaning materials or animals,
- after handling shared water (e.g., water tables)
- before and after meal times or feeding a child
- before and after preparing snack,
- before and after administering medication or first aid.

That's a lot of hand washing! This is the single best way to prevent the spread of illness. Please help us keep everyone healthy by washing your hands frequently and thoroughly. Hand washing procedures are posted in the classrooms. Hand-washing sinks are not used for bathing children. NOTE: When handling blood or bodily fluids gloves must be worn.

Assessing Children's Health

Because infections spread easily among the children, staff should be told about any potential health problems and will look for the following symptoms:

- Feverish appearance: a fever of 101 °F orally or 100 °F axillary. Children sent home with a fever **must** stay home until they have been fever free (without the use of medication) for at least 24 hours. If a child returns before 24 hours has elapsed, parents will not be permitted to leave the child at GeoKids.
- Symptoms and signs of possible severe illness: until medical evaluation allows inclusion, we may exclude your child because of unusual tiredness, uncontrolled coughing or wheezing, continuous crying or anger, or difficulty breathing.
- Diarrhea (runny, watery or bloody stools.) **Infants will usually be sent home on the third occurrence, toddlers and preschoolers usually on the second occurrence, at the staff's discretion.**
- **Vomiting within the past 24 hours.**
- Body rash with fever.
- **Any unidentified rash.** We require a note from the child's physician stating that the child's rash is not contagious.
- Sore throat with fever and swollen glands.
- Eye discharge: thick mucus or pus draining from eye, or pink eye (Viral conjunctivitis usually has a clear, watery discharge and may not require medication or exclusion.)
- Head lice or nits (eggs).
- Severe coughing: child gets red or blue in the face, or makes high-pitched whooping sound after coughing.
- Yellow skin or eyes.
- Child is irritable, continuously crying, or requires more attention than we can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children in our care.
- Contagious illness (mumps, measles, chicken pox, etc.). Please notify GeoKids at once if your child has a contagious illness, so that we can post exposure notices as required by State Licensing.

Any child that has been ill must have been symptom-free for 24 hours before returning to GeoKids. The staff may use discretion in accepting a child who shows signs of illness. When a question arises regarding proper health procedure to follow, the San Mateo County Public Health Nurse will be used as a final resource.

When Children Are Ill

If your child is ill at home, please call 650-329-4236 and leave a message with details of the symptoms. We record children's illnesses in a log, and in some cases we are required to post Health Notices.

Parents will be contacted to pick up their child if he or she becomes ill during the day. Parents notified to come and pick up their sick child will have a 60-minute response time. Failure to respond in 60 minutes may result in a penalty charge. The reason for this policy is that a sick child is isolated from the group, requiring one staff person to care for the ill child and leaving the remainder of the group with less adult supervision. The staff must be able to reach at least one parent immediately during the time their child is in attendance. If we are unable to make contact with a parent, we will contact someone from your child's emergency contact card. Please make sure that your emergency contacts are kept current.

The length of time a child must remain away from GeoKids will depend on their illness. Generally, we require that the child be symptom-free for 24 hours before returning. We realize that this can cause difficulties for working families. GeoKids maintains documentation from the Public Health Department that lists their isolation standards for certain types of illnesses. Health notices will be posted on classroom doors to inform parents of any possible contagious diseases that have been identified in the center. The names of individual children will remain confidential.

When Parents Are Ill

The health guidelines that pertain to children apply as well to parents participating in our program. If you are ill, please do not come in to co-op. Please notify GeoKids as soon as you know that you will be too ill to participate. You must call prior to the start of your co-op time to avoid fees. You may make up your participation time at a later date, as outlined under Buyouts.

Medication

Employees will not administer over-the-counter medicines such as acetaminophen without a written note from a child's physician. The parent or legal guardian is required to fill out a medication release form that allows the staff to administer any medication. Teaching staff who are required to administer special medical procedures have demonstrated to a health professional that they are competent in the procedures and are guided in writing about how to perform the procedure by the prescribing health care provider. Medication must be in its original container, have a childproof cap, be labeled with the child's first and last name, dated with either the date the prescription was filled or the recommendation was obtained from the child's licensed health care provider, the name of the licensed health care provider, the expiration date of the medication or the period of use of the medication, the manufacturer's instructions or the original prescription label that details the name and strength of the medication and instructions on how to administer and store it. All medications are kept in a locked container. No premixed medication will be administered (i.e., medicine added to formula or juice) or medication that requires staff to make a medical judgment prior to administering.

The staff member doing the medication in-take with the parent or legal guardian must be sure that the form has been filled out correctly and that any possible side effects are clearly indicated. The staff member must sign the bottom of the medication form. Medication consent forms can only be filled out for the current week; parents must fill out another consent form if the medication continues into the following week. Any child receiving long-term medication must have the medication indicated on their emergency card along with possible side effects. This would be critical information in a medical emergency.

Food and Environmental Allergies

It is critical that parents provide us with as much information as possible about food or environmental allergies. We require a written document from your child's physician regarding serious allergies. Parents are responsible for keeping us updated on any changes or new developments and to provide the center with the proper documentation and training to treat any possible exposure. GeoKids will work with parents to develop an action plan for managing the allergy while at the center. Parents are responsible for regularly checking and maintaining equipment and/or medications.

Parents are responsible for filling out the Allergy Form included in your enrollment packet. Dietary restrictions and allergies will be posted in each classroom.

No Nut Policy

For the safety of all children we have a **NO NUT POLICY** at GeoKids. This includes children's snack, lunch, and food brought in for adults. Nut allergies can result in severe, even life-threatening, reactions on contact alone so it is important that peanuts/nuts not be spread around on hands, clothes, furniture or toys. Also excluded are foods that are labeled "may contain traces of nuts" or are produced on shared equipment with nuts. Items that are produced in shared facilities are OK.

If you pack a soy/sunflower butter sandwich for your child, please label it "soy/sunflower" (a Sharpie on a plastic sandwich bag or a Post-it works great) because it looks and smells a lot like peanut butter. Labeling will help assure the staff that peanut butter has not entered the classroom. Any unlabeled lunch food, which looks like peanut butter or contains nuts will be confiscated.

First Aid and CPR Training

All staff receive first aid training and CPR training every two years. The GeoKids staff also receive annual training in accordance with the California Childcare Health and Safety Standards in preventive health practices such as the control of infectious diseases, childhood injury prevention, and emergency preparedness and evacuation.

First Aid Kit

Each classroom has two first aid kits, one located on the wall near the exit and the other located in the emergency backpack. The emergency backpack is used every time teachers and children venture away from GeoKids (i.e. field trips, walks around the USGS, walk to the park.) Extra first aid supplies are located in the front lobby.

Universal Precautions

Faced with concerns about the spread of serious infections, hospitals and health centers use a successful technique that is also appropriate for childcare settings. Rather than waiting to find out who is contagious, they treat everyone as a potentially infected person. The name of this infection control method is "Universal Precautions" and it gives a set of guidelines for when you come into contact with body fluids and wastes that carry germs. Children and adults with infections like colds, diarrhea, diseases and skin and eye infections are often contagious 3-10 days before you might notice a symptom. Hepatitis and HIV/AIDS have even longer incubation periods. Germs are spread through contact with respiratory droplets, body wastes and blood. In the childcare setting the universal precautions method involves:

- Washing hands frequently and well
- Proper waste disposal
- Use of disposable gloves when diapering and when dealing with blood or other bodily fluids
- Use of sanitizing cleaner on all counters and surfaces that children touch

Information provided by The Center for Health Training.

Oral Health Policy

GeoKids staff will never put a child down for nap with a bottle, and will only give a child a bottle during meals; bottles are never to be used as pacifiers. We will help support families who want their child to brush their teeth after meals.

Health Precautions for Communal Water Play

Children are not allowed to drink from the water table. Children with sores on their hands are not permitted to participate in communal water play. Fresh water is used and changed between groups. The water table is drained and cleaned daily.

A Note About Language Concerning Bodies

Adults are sometimes uncomfortable talking to children about body functions and parts, often resorting to euphemisms or avoiding them. This can be confusing for children, and at worst it can convey the unintentional

message that there is something wrong with their bodies. We believe that it is important to be straightforward with children, and so you will hear us using the words “penis,” “vagina,” and “vulva” at appropriate times.

We feel strongly that children are best served by providing them with accurate, positive information about their bodies, and we support the development of a strong, healthy body image. We believe that this can contribute to children’s sense of ownership of their bodies and to their physical safety.

COMMUNICATION

The success, strength, and progress of GeoKids depend upon an open, responsive, and ongoing system of communication that fosters an effective and mutually beneficial exchange of ideas.

The Staff

The Executive Director is the main source of all policy information and is responsible for keeping you informed on matters relevant to center policy. The core teaching staff in your child’s program is your daily direct communication link to matters relating to your child’s care at GeoKids. Plan to keep the teachers informed of any of your child’s needs. In addition to direct verbal exchange, each classroom has a whiteboard or other system for information such as a different pick-up routine to be noted. The core teaching staff has planning time each week. During this time they can arrange to speak with you if there are areas of concern that need additional discussion.

Classroom Parent Communication

Communication exchange processes vary from year to year in each program. Please check with your child’s teachers to find out their current system.

Parent Meetings

Parent meetings are held twice each year for you and staff to discuss how the program is working, to review goals, and to plan for upcoming events. These meetings allow you to discuss concerns with teachers and other parents, and to learn more about developmental stages.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parent conferences are offered twice per year. The purpose of these conferences is for staff and parents to gain a greater mutual understanding of the children by sharing insights, observations and assessments. Parents should not hesitate to request additional conferences with staff whenever they feel there is a need.

General Membership Meetings

The GeoKids parent membership assembles twice each year to address the state of the organization and the center. The first meeting is held by October to introduce the newly elected board members and review the annual plan. The second meeting is held by May to present the upcoming year’s budget to the membership and to vote on any proposed fee increases. Additional membership meetings may be called as needed. It is a responsibility of each family to attend these meetings.

Member Directory

Each school year GeoKids distributes a Member Directory that includes the names, address, telephone numbers and email information for all members. If you do not want this information in the Member Directory, let someone on the administrative staff know your preference.

Parent Mailboxes

Parent mailboxes in the lobby are for all school information including billing, schedules, and notices. Please check your box frequently. Messages widely distributed to members should be copied to the Executive Director and the staff. Items may be left for staff at the front desk. Please include your name on all communications

Use of Letterhead

Use of GeoKids letterhead is restricted to those who are authorized to speak on behalf of GeoKids, which includes the elected Board, the Center Director, or their appointed representatives.

Telephone and Fax Numbers

The following telephone numbers are used for the Center:

(650) 329-4236 This is the front desk phone that rings directly in the lobby. Use this number to relay general information, late for co-op or pick up, buyout requests, sick child or drop in requests.

(650) 329-4234 This is Executive Director's direct line. Use this number for any concerns you wish to address to her.

(650) 329-4239 This number rings directly into Room 1 and should only be used in emergencies or for parents needing to check on young infants. Please try other numbers first!

(650) 329-4200 GeoKids Fax number

Email

To email families in particular rooms to request coop swaps and make room-specific announcements, use the room email alias, which is the room name followed by the school year.

Example: "moonstone14@geokids.org"

Room teacher aliases for the current school year are the room name followed by "teachers."

Example: "opal.teachers@geokids.org"

Additional aliases:

- **"teachers@geokids.org"** Email the whole GeoKids staff.
- **"scheduling@geokids.org"** Use this email address to relay general scheduling information, late for co-op or pick up, buy- out requests, sick child or drop in requests.
- **"billing@geokids.org"** Use this email address for all billing questions.
- **"everyone@geokids.org"** Email to the whole Center. All families are on this list. This address is a moderated mailing list, so any message sent to it must be approved by the moderator before it is actually delivered.
- **"board@geokids.org"** Email the entire Board of Directors

GeoKids Annual Parent and Staff Surveys

Parents/guardians and staff are asked to complete a survey at the end of each year. This information helps to assess how the program is meeting the needs of parents/guardians and children, as well as to identify strengths and weaknesses of the program to help set program goals for the next year. A copy of the report is made available to all parents/guardians and staff with suggested recommendations and improvements.

Parent Grievance Procedure

A grievance is an unresolved complaint for which the remedy would not be contrary to GeoKids' policy, by-laws, or contracts. This procedure is designed to ensure the timely and fair resolution of parent grievances.

1. Parents should discuss their grievance with the staff within 5 days of the event.
2. If the grievance remains unresolved after 3 days, the parent shall take the grievance to the Executive Director.
3. Should the grievance still remain unresolved after 3 days, the parent may submit a written statement of grievance to the Board President. A Grievance Committee, which shall consist of three members (2 from the Board and 1 from the membership-at-large) shall be appointed by the Board within 3 days after receipt of the letter.
4. Within 7 days the committee shall hear the grievance.
5. Within 3 days of the hearing, the committee shall submit their recommendation to the Board.
6. Within 5 working days the Board will render a decision to the parent.

*Days always refers to business days.

Procedure For Staff And Families To Negotiate Differences

Parents who have a concern about the program need to address the concern with the classroom teacher or with the Executive Director who may and can directly address the concern or complaint. Differences between families are handled confidentially and without bringing the individual families together.

Confidentiality

GeoKids maintains a strict policy of confidentiality for all matters concerning children. If a parent has a concern about an individual child's behavior, that concern should be raised with the classroom staff, rather than with other parents. Parents who feel that confidentiality regarding their family has been breached, should raise the concern with the Executive Director. This confidentiality policy applies to mailbox, bulletin Board, and all other forms of communication.

GeoKids is a very interactive center. It is possible that during your time in the program you may become privy to information about a particular child, family or staff person that should be considered confidential. Confidentiality of information and respect for individual privacy are to be maintained at all.

The use or disclosure of all information pertaining to the child and his/her family shall be restricted to purposes directly connected with the administration of the program. The Director will request written permission from you before disclosing information about your child to others (with the exceptions noted in the following paragraph.)

The California Department of Social Services has the authority to interview children or staff, and to inspect and audit child or childcare center records, without prior consent. The Department also has the authority to observe the physical condition of the children, including conditions that could indicate abuse, neglect or inappropriate placement. Appropriate identification from the Department will be obtained prior to the interview. Written consent is required if parents want GeoKids to share information regarding their child to another agency (school district, health provider).

ASSESSMENT

Teachers complete written assessments of children twice per year and share these assessments with parents at parent-teacher conferences. The assessment tools used vary with the age of the children. Assessments include developmental milestones, observations of social and emotional development, examples of children's work and photographs. Teachers and parents together formulate goals for each child.

GeoKids staff are not developmental or special-needs experts, but based on their experiences with many children, they sometimes observe behaviors in a child that could be indicators of a developmental delay or physical disability. When such concerns arise, teachers will meet with parents to discuss their observations. When appropriate, and with parents' approval, GeoKids staff can arrange for outside experts to observe the child and provide insights or advice.

From time to time, GeoKids arranges for a specialist to come to the center and screen children for speech and language or other developments. In these cases, parents can sign up to have their child screened and pay a nominal fee for the service.

LIMIT SETTING

At GeoKids, we see limit setting as part of a larger goal of positively guiding children toward self-direction, in an atmosphere of mutual respect and cooperation. We do this by:

- Modeling desirable behavior;
- Listening when children communicate their thoughts, ideas and feelings;
- Encouraging children to participate in decision-making and conflict resolution at the level that they are capable;

- Explaining why a limit exists;
- Encouraging children to participate in everything that concerns them and to do as much as they are capable of doing for themselves;
- Asking adults for help when they need it.

As caregivers and parents working together in the classroom it is essential that we set boundaries for the safety of the children and the appropriate use of materials. Beyond these concerns, we can best support the development of children's self-direction by giving children the time and support to solve their own problems and conflicts. As facilitators we can ask questions, clarify information, offer suggestions, and listen to the concerns and needs of the child. If you have a question about limits in the classroom, or need assistance setting appropriate limits, teachers are happy to help you with this sometimes-tricky subject. Furthermore, we regularly schedule discussion meetings on this topic.

Some guidelines:

- Because words alone do not always convey a limit to young children, we follow through on limit setting with an action.
- When setting limits with children, we speak at their eye level and try to use positive direction
- Tell the child what it is they can do instead of what they cannot do.
- We do not use "time outs"; however, in some instances, separation from the group for a short time is necessary to help a child gain control.
- In no case will corporal punishment, ridicule or retribution be used on a child by a teacher or parent co-
oping.

BEHAVIOR GUIDANCE

Behavioral guidance practices at GeoKids are based upon a commitment to safety and respect for the individual child as well as for the children as a group. We respect the rights of each child to grow and learn at his/her own pace, and we accept that there is a wide range of children's feelings and temperaments.

We hold age-appropriate expectations for children's ability to accept responsibility for their own behavior. We believe that children gradually internalize limits and controls when they are supported by adults who accept the child's feelings as legitimate, who are consistent in teaching social skills, and who model in their own behavior an example that they would like children to follow. Self-control is only beginning to emerge in the early years; it takes time and lots of practice. We help children gradually learn to exercise the self-control necessary to behave appropriately. There is no one solution for every child or every situation.

Following are guidelines for behavior guidance practices at GeoKids:

- When setting and enforcing reasonable limits, we explain the reasons for the limits to children. We express our authentic concerns to children.
- We use "natural consequences" for children's behavior. Examples: if a child throws sand in the sandbox, the natural consequence is to be asked to leave the sandbox for a period of time. If a child is disrupting other children's play, he/she may be asked to play in another area. If he/she is repeatedly misusing materials after limits have been explained, he/she may be disallowed from using those materials for a time, before being allowed to "try again."
- When conflicts arise between children, we move quickly to protect safety and then involve the children in a conflict-resolution process aimed at supporting them as they learn social problem-solving skills.
- At no time do we use disrespectful, demeaning or threatening language with children.

- We do not practice “time outs.” However, when child’s behavior is disruptive to the extent that s/he needs to be removed from the group, a teacher may remove that child for the short duration of time needed for the child to calm him/herself under the supervision of a teacher. No restraint is used, except to protect the child from injuring himself or others. We use a firm but calm tone and words, maintaining respect for the child.
- At no time and under no circumstances may a child be spanked at GeoKids. We are mandated reporters to Child Protective Services, and we are required by law to report any incident in which a child is physically or emotionally harmed.

We recognize that your own practices at home may differ from those outlined here. We respectfully request that you follow these practices while at GeoKids.

FOOD

Each child brings lunch from home. In the Moonstone room lunches are stored in bins in the refrigerator, and therefore do not need to be brought in an insulated lunchbox. In the Moonstone room, food can be reheated if necessary. For children in all the other rooms, lunch should be brought in an insulated lunchbox. Food will not be reheated and so parents should select food accordingly, or use a thermos to keep food warm.

Snacks are provided by GeoKids two times each day, once in the mid-morning and again in mid-afternoon. Snacks are vegetarian and consist of whole-grain crackers and breads, yogurt, cheese, fresh fruits, vegetables and other nutritious foods.

Please send foods that are safe for young children to eat and healthy. GeoKids can provide lunch suggestions. Please avoid foods high in refined or added sugar. Although teachers sit with children during meals and encourage them to eat, we cannot force children to eat. Teachers do not insist that children eat certain foods before others. If you have concerns about your child’s eating, please arrange to meet with teachers.

The following foods are choking hazards for children under the age of 4:

Raw carrots (in rounds)	Whole grapes or cherry tomatoes
Marshmallows	Hot dogs (whole or rounds)
Large pieces of meat	Popcorn
Meat with bones	Hard candy
Fish with bones	Chewing gum
Chunks of hard vegetables	

Some foods can be altered to make them safe:

- Hot dogs: cut in quarters lengthwise, then into small pieces
- Whole grapes, strawberries, cherry tomatoes: cut in half lengthwise (in quarters if very large)
- Raw carrots: chop finely, or cut into thin sticks, or partially cook
- Large pieces of meat or hard vegetables: cut into pieces smaller than ½”
- Cheese should be cut into pieces smaller than ½”

For the youngest children:

- Pull string cheese into strings or cut into pea-size chunks
- Cut very large blueberries in half
- Do not send chips or pretzels if your child is not able to chew them properly

Parents are responsible for filling out the Food Allergy Form and Dietary Restriction form, which is included in your enrollment packet. Dietary restrictions and allergies will be posted in each classroom.

DIAPERING AND TOILET LEARNING

Diapering

Unfortunately, we cannot permit cloth diapers. Wipes are provided by the center. Over-the-counter diaper creams/ointments must be purchased by the parent for the child and should be labeled with the child's name. Parents must complete a written permission statement allowing us to apply the diaper cream/ointment. If a prescription ointment is to be applied, a Medication Permission Form must be completed and signed by the parent. In addition, extra sets of outer clothing should be brought in as clothing can be soiled by diaper leaks.

Note: Due to state licensing requirements, parents are only allowed to diaper their *own* children. A procedure for diapering is posted in the infant and toddler rooms. It is very important to follow this procedure, which is probably different from your diapering practices at home, in order to maintain a healthy environment in a group care setting. Gloves must be worn for all diapering, even when diapering your own child.

Toilet Learning

Children are not required to be toilet trained. For many children, the transition out of diapers will occur during the time they are enrolled in our program. This process is most successful when there is clear communication between home and GeoKids. Please discuss your child's readiness for toilet learning with the staff.

VARIOUS POLICIES

Field Trips

Classrooms occasionally plan a field trip as part of their investigations. Parents who are driving children to and from a field trip are required to fill out the Field Trip Checklist. A copy of your Driver's License and Auto Insurance need to be on file at GeoKids.

Records Accessible To Families For Review

Licensing regulations, accreditation materials, child abuse/neglect policies, their child's assessments and developmental records are available to families for review.

Annual NAEYC Review Policy

The Executive Director will share the information gathered from the annual Family Survey and Program Evaluations required by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) to maintain our accredited status. GeoKids uses the results and information from these evaluations to establish goals for continuous improvement and innovation.

Cultural Celebrations

In celebrating holidays in the classroom we consider four main points. First, based on our operational vision, the celebration of holidays should be based on what children are able to do and what their interests are. Holidays can be a particularly stressful time for families and children; there are customs and expectations that can be overly stimulating for children. We like to have GeoKids be a source of support and routine for children during such times. Second, we believe that the celebration of any holiday or cultural event should occur in the context of other kinds of activities related to a particular cultural group. Third, we seek to understand and validate the different families and cultures represented in the classroom, not simply the dominant culture. And fourth, holiday celebrations can be a very personal affair for some families.

Birthdays

Much like holiday celebrations, birthday celebrations in school can often be overwhelming for the child, so we ask that parents do not bring in cakes, hats, etc. We are also not permitted to serve snacks to children that have been prepared outside of GeoKids. Each classroom has an age-appropriate birthday tradition to celebrate each child.

Pet Guidelines

The decision to have pets in our classrooms is made with great care and must be approved by the Executive Director. GeoKids will not bring in harmful animals, insects, pests or poisonous plants.

- All animals are properly cared for and provided clean water, appropriate food, clean cages, and vaccinations
- No animals are allowed in the food preparation areas. Food preparation areas and supplies are not used to clean animal cages or aquariums.
- Pet enclosures are not placed in areas where children eat or food is served.
- Children and adults wash their hands after handling or feeding animals. Children do not clean cages.
- Animal food is stored separately from human food. Animal food is kept tightly closed to prevent insect infestations. Uneaten food is removed from cages promptly.
- We plan for the care of pets during holidays, weekends, and vacations.

No Smoking Policy

No smoking is permitted on the premises as per state law; this includes parents and staff.

Shady Center Policy

GeoKids aims to protect children from skin damage caused by the harmful ultraviolet (UV) rays of the sun. We encourage children to wear sunhats outside when playing in the sun. It is the responsibility of the parents to provide hats for their children. We set up activities in shade as much as possible for summer months. We encourage parents through daily communication and e-mails to apply sunscreen to their children before arrival at GeoKids.

Outdoor Policy

Children generally spend time outdoors every day. We feel that it is important for children to experience the outdoor environment in all kinds of weather, and ask that parents provide appropriate clothing for rain, cold and heat. In cases of extreme weather, we limit or exclude outdoor play. Also taken into consideration is the humidity, ozone levels, pollen count, lightening, rain or ice. When "Spare the Air" days are announced for our area, we limit outdoor playtime.

Children will not be kept inside if their class is going outside unless a written excuse is obtained from the child's doctor. Our playground meets all of the safety standards established for play equipment for young children. A fence for the safety and protection of all children surrounds the playground. Safety guidelines and limits for the preschool yard are posted.

Biting

Periodically, outbreaks of biting occur in the infant program, and sometimes among preschoolers. When it happens, it can be frustrating and stressful for everyone. Biting is a natural occurrence and not something to blame on children, parents or teachers. There is no quick and easy solution, but we employ a variety of strategies to minimize it.

Children might bite for a variety of reasons: the simple sensory exploration of infants, stress or panic, competition for toys, crowding, lack of expressive language, lack of impulse control, seeking attention. Repeated biting can become a pattern of learned behavior that can be hard to stop. Some children become "stuck" for a while in a biting behavior and it is frustrating for the parents of the victims that we are unable to "fix" the child quickly or terminate care. We make every effort to stop the behavior and to protect all children, balancing our commitment to the family of the biting child with our commitment to other families. Parents of children who are doing the biting will be informed of incidents and actions being taken by the staff to prevent further incidents.

Visitors

If any visitors will be coming to see your child at the center, you must give us written permission in advance. The visitor must show photo identification; a GeoKids Administrator will accompany the visitor to the child's room.

Use of Scented Products

Some children and staff are very sensitive to perfumes and scented products and may have allergic reactions when exposed to them, such as difficulty breathing, not feeling well, noticeable behavior changes, etc. Reactions to these products can last for hours. We request that you not spray perfume or cologne on yourself or use heavily scented hair gels or hair sprays on your child before attending the Center. GeoKids staff are asked not to use these kinds of scented products on the days they are working at the Center. Soaps, shampoos, conditioners, laundry detergents, etc. are usually not a problem because after use they are rinsed or washed off.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Child Accident or Injury

In the event of a serious injury to a child at GeoKids, the staff will make every effort to contact you. If we cannot reach you, we will call your child's physician or transport your child to the nearest hospital emergency room. If necessary we will call an ambulance or paramedic team. Until the physician, an ambulance, the paramedics, or you arrive, the Executive Director or another staff member will make all decisions concerning the care of your child. You will be expected to assume responsibility for any resultant expenses. GeoKids will maintain a signed consent form with your agreement to these provisions. It is important that you keep GeoKids up-to-date on work and home phone numbers, emergency contact's phone numbers, and other pertinent information.

Emergencies and Drills

We have a detailed plan for response to emergencies such as natural disaster, earthquake or other hazardous conditions. The plan is available for you to read at the front desk. GeoKids runs the following drills in a school year:

1. Once a month, GeoKids holds an unexpected, non-planned Fire Drill.
2. Quarterly, GeoKids holds an Earthquake Drill.
3. Annually, GeoKids holds a mass evacuation.

Center Evacuation

In case of fire, earthquake or other hazardous conditions, if there is structural damage to the building or if circumstances mandate, the staff will evacuate the children to a safe place and will post notices at GeoKids stating the time GeoKids was evacuated and where the children have been taken. As the situation allows, the staff will make every possible effort to contact parents with instructions. Parents should keep the GeoKids' phone list in an easily accessible place in the event that they are called upon to notify other members.

Should a disaster or disaster drill occur during your participation time or during arrival and drop-off time, please follow the instructions of the staff. During a disaster, parent responsibility is to follow the instructions of the staff, assisting in the evacuation of the children to the designated spot. Emergency procedures and evacuation maps are posted in each classroom. Please note their location.

Evacuation Route

If a fire, earthquake or other hazardous conditions occur, if there is structural damage to the building or if circumstances mandate, the staff will evacuate the children to designated locations.

Fires: Evacuate to flagpole circle

Earthquake: After shaking stops, evacuate to flagpole circle

When children must be evacuated away from the USGS Campus:

1. Burgess Park Gymnasium, 501 Laurel Street, .67 miles from GeoKids
2. Stanford Park Hotel, 100 El Camino Real, 1.6 miles from GeoKids

Power Failure/Disruption of Water Service

In the event of power failure or disruption of water service, GeoKids will contact families if services do not resume within 1 hour and parents will be instructed to pick up their children immediately.

CHILD ABUSE REPORTING

All members of the GeoKids staff are mandated by California law (California Penal Code 11165.7) to report cases of suspected child neglect and/or abuse (physical, emotional, and/or sexual) immediately to a child protection agency.

The intent of the reporting law is to protect the child. At GeoKids we highly value our relationships with families. We also recognize and value the trust that parents demonstrate by leaving their children in our care. For these reasons the responsibility of mandated reporting can present a dilemma to a staff member who hears or sees something that might be considered neglect or abuse. Please remember that if a report is made by a GeoKids staff member, it is due to this legal responsibility, and is done non-judgmentally and with utmost confidentiality. Our responsibility is merely to report, not investigate.

Note that child abuse law considers discipline that results in bruises and any other injuries caused by spanking to be a form of child abuse. We recognize that while some cultural practices may appear to look like child abuse, they may not be; likewise, the same practice, if done improperly or to excess, could constitute child abuse. Practices that are generally acceptable within a particular culture may constitute child abuse under the Penal Code, and would necessitate a child abuse report. In most cases we will notify you when a report has been made.

If you need information about disciplining your children or help with other parenting issues, please see the Executive Director to get information, assistance and/or referrals to appropriate services.